



The **HAVA Bulletin**

An Update on the Help America Vote Act

Visit our website at www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/

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Message from the Secretary of State



Matthew Dunlap
Secretary of State

With your help, Maine has made significant progress carrying out the Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA). This law will enhance consistency, integrity and accuracy for all Federal elections throughout the nation. The *HAVA Bulletin* will ensure that you receive monthly updates about HAVA projects, upcoming events and timelines. Already, to meet other HAVA requirements, we have convened election official training sessions, provided voters with new information about their rights, and completed an accessibility survey for all polling places in Maine. In addition, we have begun the design of a statewide Central Voter Registration System (CVR). By the end of this year, every municipality will be online with the CVR, benefiting from its many time-saving efficiencies and improving the overall accuracy of statewide voter registration information. The CVR and its benefits are explained more fully in this issue of the *HAVA Bulletin*. Also, by the end of this year, every polling place will be provided with accessible voting equipment to meet the needs of those with disabilities. Through HAVA, Maine is strengthening its voter registration process and ensuring every eligible citizen's right—and ability—to vote.

We have a great deal to accomplish in 2005, and I am confident that together we will succeed in meeting our goals and the Federal deadline of January 1, 2006. The Federal HAVA requirements impose some challenges on all of us, but they will bring major new benefits and opportunities, and I want to assure you of our support in these efforts. In addition to the *HAVA Bulletin*, we will contact you with periodic mailings and phone calls to schedule and plan data conversion, CVR training, and other specific events. You will also find up-to-date information on the CVR and accessible voting equipment on our HAVA website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/.

While serving in the Legislature, I had the opportunity to meet with many municipal clerks and registrars. I look forward to working with you in my new capacity over the next year and beyond. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff with any questions at 624-7650 or drop me a line at: sos.office@maine.gov.

Feature: Central Voter Registration System (CVR)

Municipalities to Receive CVR Computer Equipment

We are pleased to announce that all Maine municipalities will receive computers as part of the Central Voter Registration System (CVR). The CVR will be online by January 1, 2006. Because this new system is a requirement of Federal and State law, the Secretary of State will provide all municipalities with the necessary equipment and training to use the CVR. Computers, scanners, bar code readers and printers will be assigned to each municipality for use by the clerk and registrar to access, print, update and maintain their voter lists.

The State is currently developing a policy on ownership and use restrictions for this equipment, and will work with each municipality to ensure there is an adequate Internet connection. While details about the equipment and use limitations are being developed, municipalities should keep this in mind as they make budget decisions this year. We will be in close contact with you as this process unfolds.

For more on the CVR, see inside>>>

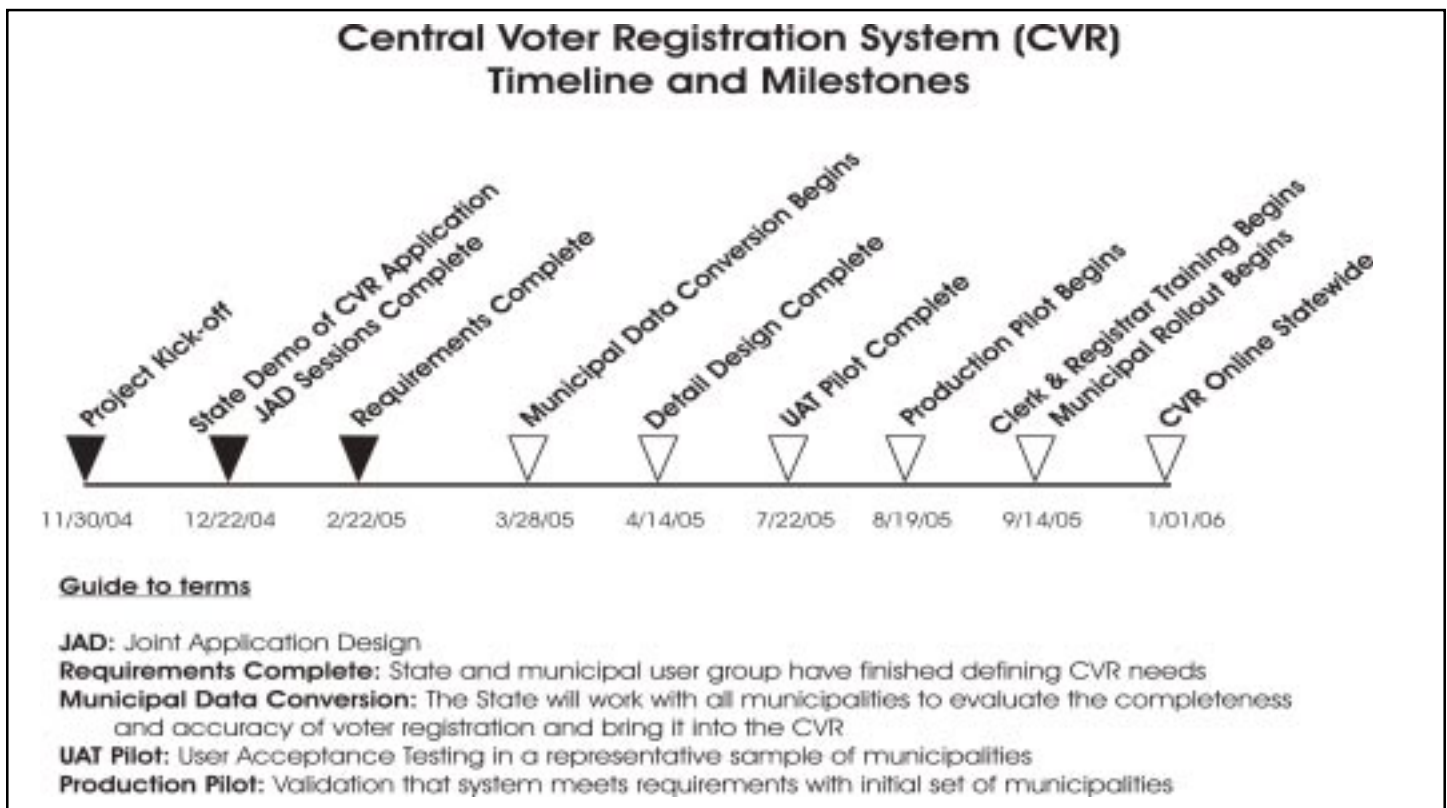
Central Voter Registration System (CVR)

The Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) mandates that every state must have a statewide centralized voter registration database by January 1, 2006. Known by its initials CVR, this project is a large-scale effort to ensure that voter lists are accurate and free of duplication. The CVR's electronic files will be housed in computers at the Division of Elections in Augusta, and will be available to municipal clerks and registrars over a secure Internet connection. Instead of more than 500 municipal lists maintained separately, there will be one statewide list which each municipality can access, update, and use for its elections. Once this and similar programs are in place across the country, elections everywhere in America will be as successful and reliable as they are here in Maine.

At different levels, municipal and state, we spend our time and resources providing essential services to the residents of our local communities. By coordinating the strength of over 500 municipalities in a single voter database, all the communities and residents of Maine will benefit. Voting will be easier and more accurate—for voters and election officials. Together, we will build a statewide database that will not only provide many municipalities with functionality they do not currently have, but it will also relieve some of the heavy workload. The CVR will provide the following benefits to election officials:

- Easy-to-use reporting and online inquiries
- Online viewing of voter signatures
- Streamlined absentee ballot tracking and petition certification
- Verification and query capabilities with other municipalities
- Reduction in list maintenance duties through automated notices to voters and messages to other municipalities
- Elimination of most reporting requirements to the State

We recognize that bringing this technology to some areas will be challenging for those municipal officials who have not had the previous experience and training necessary to use this type of system. We are currently developing a plan to provide assistance to those communities that do not currently have the technology required to use the CVR. We will also provide various levels of training to assist election officials in using the new technology.



Q & A's

Q. Why is Maine creating a Central Voter Registration system (CVR)?

A. The Federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and State law require that by January 1, 2006 we implement a central, computerized, statewide voter registration system. These laws require the Secretary of State to create the CVR to improve the integrity, reliability and accuracy of voter registration information and maintain uniform procedures statewide.

Q. How much will it cost municipalities?

A. The State does not plan to charge a fee to municipalities for access or maintenance of the system. Maine intends to use federal HAVA funds to develop the CVR and to provide every municipality with the equipment necessary to run this application.

Q. How will our town be connected?

A. Each municipality will use either their current Internet Service Provider (ISP) or the State will assist you in obtaining Internet access. We will work with each municipality to enable you to use the system.

Q. How will our voter registration information be moved to the CVR?

A. We will undertake a data conversion process by which we will obtain the voter registration information for each municipality and convert it into the fields and format required by the CVR. The converted data will then be sent back to each municipality for review and verification. This exchange of data will take place one to three times, depending on the type of voter registration system you have now, to ensure the information is correct and complete. Each municipality will have specific instructions relevant to its particular needs on how to provide the initial set of data for conversion and how to review and verify the data when it is returned.

Q. What kind of training will be offered prior to using the CVR system?

A. We are developing a detailed training strategy and schedule which will address the needs of users with little or no computer experience, as well as those who have a high level of computer experience.

Q. Will I have the same access to my municipality's voter list as I do now?

A. Yes, you will still have access to and authority over the list of voters who are registered in your municipality.

Q. Will municipalities have access to the statewide voter list?

A. Municipal election officials will have access to view the entire statewide voter list, and they will have access to update and report on voter information for their municipality's voters only.

Q. What kind of report functions will the system offer?

A. The CVR system provides an extremely user friendly and comprehensive report module. You will have access to a wide range of search criteria and sort options to meet your reporting needs. Many of the reports you are currently responsible for preparing will be available from a list of pre-formatted reports, and any other information you may need can be extracted from the database for use in other programs to create your own documents.

Q. Will I continue to use my current voter registration system along with the CVR?

A. No, you will not maintain your voter list on two separate systems. The CVR will be the only official list for your voter information.

Additional frequently asked questions and answers, along with other important information regarding the implementation of HAVA will appear in future editions of the *HAVA Bulletin*. Also, as we work together to implement HAVA, we will provide relevant information and updates as they become available on our HAVA website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/.

Questions about CVR or HAVA?

Website: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/

Email: sos.office@maine.gov

Phone: 624-7650

